

Upper Little Deschutes River

Recreation Report

Prepared by:

Michelle King
District Environmental Coordinator
Acting District Recreation Team Lead (March-September 2017)

for:

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Introduction

The ULDR is a special place on the Crescent District known mostly to locals and sportsmen. This undiscovered area of National Forest provides various recreation opportunities irrespective of the lack of developed sites and trails. It is often described as the ‘backyard’ of the Crescent community as the Forest Service parcels are nearly completely surrounded by private land.

Creating and maintaining sustainable recreation within the ULDR project area is a key component of the purpose and need. Not only does sustainable and respectful recreation increase the visitor’s experience and reduce user conflict, it also protects the natural resources for future generations of visitors. Since Forest Service land is directly adjacent to private land, this project also provides them with clean water and a healthy, resilient forest.

Unfortunately, some individuals take advantage of the area and take part in illegal activities on Forest Service land. This includes illegal bridge building, off-road ATV/4x4 riding in sensitive habitats causing resource damage, and illegal residents (not campers) building structures to live on Forest Service land. These users are a small minority, however, their actions can have great implications to other visitors. This project addresses those illegal uses and develops strategies to prevent them in the future.

Resource Indicators and Measures

Effects to recreation will be measured with two general indicators 1) presence/availability of desired feature and 2) quality of feature and environment. Essentially, can a visitor find the recreational opportunity they were looking for and what is the quality of that experience. Entire project area is designated General Forest so there are no Scenic View standards.

Table 1: Resource indicators and measures for assessing effects

Resource Element	Resource Indicator	Used to address: P/N
Dispersed Camping	1. Availability 2. Quality	Yes
Hunting: Camping and Hunting	1. Availability 2. Quality	Yes
Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing	1. Availability 2. Quality	Yes
Dispersed motorized use	1. Availability 2. Quality	Yes
Fishing	1. Availability 2. Quality	Yes
Special Uses	Individual Basis	No
Private property access	Individual Basis	No

Methodology

Information Sources

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Crescent Ranger District went through the Ecosystem Services Values Mapping process. This included values-based discussions about values, benefits, and uses that occur in

the project area. These discussions occurred internally with Crescent Ranger District employees and externally at a public meeting. Notes from the two discussions can be found in the project file within the Recreation specialist report.

Affected Environment

Existing Condition

The Upper Little Deschutes Restoration project consists of two separate areas along the Little Deschutes River that are separated by private land. It includes the northern portion (also known as Odell Pasture), and the southern area. The northern area is surrounded by private lands and Forest Service access is off County road 61 (also known as Crescent Cut-off road). The southern portion is adjacent to Highway 58 and partially bordered on the east side by private lands. Forest Service road 6125 (Gullick road) traverses through this portion and the western edge of the northern portion of the project area. Both areas are heavily utilized by the local population for fishing, hunting, recreation, and access to private lands adjacent to Forest Service lands. In both sections there is evidence of unauthorized cross-country travel that is creating riparian and resource damage.

Table 2: Resource indicators and measures for the existing condition

Resource Element	Resource Indicator (Quantify if possible)	Measure (Quantify if possible)	Existing Condition (Alternative 1)
Dispersed Camping	1. Availability 2. Quality	Availability=observed presence Quality= professional judgement, public feedback	1. Excellent 2. Adequate/Poor
Hunting: Camping and Hunting	1. Availability 2. Quality	..	1. Excellent 2. Adequate
Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing	1. Availability 2. Quality	..	1. Excellent 2. Adequate
Dispersed motorized use	1. Availability 2. Quality	..	1. Adequate 2. Poor
Fishing	1. Availability 2. Quality	..	1. Excellent 2. Excellent
Special Uses	Individual Basis	Individual Basis	Adequate- currently meeting needs.
Private property access	Individual Basis	Individual Basis	Lack of consistent management.

Dispersed Camping

Availability

There are extensive opportunities for dispersed camping within the project area. This area is one of the lowest elevation camping destinations on the Crescent Ranger District, so depending on the winter, it can see year round use. There are 19 documented dispersed sites within the project area, most directly adjacent to the Upper Little Deschutes River. These sites have no developed features (picnic tables, restrooms, designated sites, potable water, fire rings) and are not actively managed by the Forest Service.

Some sites and man-made clearings appear to only be operating as dumping areas. These are further identified as ‘Dump Sites’. It does not appear that any camping occurs within these areas, members of the public appear to just be leaving home garbage and other trash.

Quality

The existing dispersed sites appear to be providing adequate spaces for public need. Many of the sites are easily accessible and close to water. Campers utilize the water for cooking and cleaning as well as swimming in the summer months. Some of the sites, however, are seeing resource damage and expanding beyond a reasonable limit. Many of the sites are expanding all the way to the river’s bank, creating erosion. Additionally, in some sites there are evidence of trees being cut down and vegetation being driven over. This expansion can be a natural occurrence over time when there aren’t large natural barriers within sites and when there isn’t a regular Forest Service presence. Some of the sites also have become OHV play areas with ‘donuts’ and other damage from motorized vehicles. With this amount of expansion and resource damage, the quality of some of these sites are diminished. Instead of feeling like a camping spot, some of these have the appearance of a sand pit. There is a need to define these sites, clean them up, and increase presence to enhance their recreational quality. While some sites are in excellent condition, the majority of sites are adequate or poor quality because of the outlined issues.



Figure 1: Evidence of motorized use resource damage. ‘Donuts’ and large ruts in the pumice are evident at Dispersed Site #14.

Individuals or groups that camp on the National Forest for non-recreational purposes are referred to as ‘residers’. They do not have another primary residence and regardless of how many days they stay, they are illegally residing (recreational campers are allowed to camp in one location for up to two weeks). Residers have been documented in the Upper Little Deschutes River project area throughout the year. The close proximity to town makes it appealing to people that still want to work and be near Crescent or La Pine. Forest Service law enforcement and field rangers make early contact with groups expected to be residing and inform them of Forest Service camping policy. For those residers that stay for extended periods of time without another residence, they can quickly cause extreme resource damage to the surrounding area. These groups often create toilets and other built structures out of the surrounding trees and vegetation and often leave behind large quantities of trash. This issue is not as prevalent on the Crescent Ranger District like it is on other neighboring district, however, one group can cause sustaining

damage to a dispersed site. (Note: residents are not assumed to be participating in other illegal activities. Many people are in the unfortunate situation of being temporarily homeless and are just attempting to find a place to stay)

Hunting: Camping and Hunting

Availability

Similar to dispersed camping, there are excellent options for hunting camping. Hunters are often seen occupying the majority of dispersed campsites during the fall season. Some hunting occurs within the project area, but many individuals camp along the Little Deschutes and then hunt in other locations on the district. Hunting locations/units are dictated by Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife and are designated with specific seasons. Unless there is an extremely high amount of early season snow, most of the dispersed camping sites are snow-free and open during the hunting season. Most of the official campground on the district and forest are closed during hunting season, so dispersed camping sites are the best options.

Quality

The existing sites appear to be providing adequate spaces for public need during hunting season. The ability to camp near water is extremely important when groups are staying for long stretches of time (often close to two weeks). Similar to dispersed camping, the sites are seeing resource damage and expansion. In some cases, multiple 'game poles' (small diameter tree stripped of branches and fastened between trees to hang the carcass of game animals) have been created in one location. Additionally, some hunting camps build temporary bathrooms and don't remove all the features when they leave. When these activities occur, the site no longer looks natural with all of the evidence of previous occupants (see DS #12). Many of these built features also include hunters/campers cutting and removing trees around the campsite. This causes resource damage by removing natural vegetation and gradually increases the size of the site.



Figure 2: Dispersed site (DS) #12 in southern section of project area.

The Crescent Ranger District has healthy deer and elk populations. It has long been a favored area in Oregon State for multiple types of hunting seasons. The Little Deschutes River is a great location for hunters looking to be relatively close to amenities (gas, stores) while also near multiple hunting unit areas.

Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing

Availability

There are no designated trails within the Upper Little Deschutes River project area but there are great opportunities for hiking cross country, walking, and wildlife viewing. The project areas is relatively flat with several access routes to the river, making it excellent for walking and hiking. People hike cross country, walk along the roads, or walk along old/decommissioned roads. Many locals can access the area from their private property.

Availability

Even during the summer, this area sees light recreational-use, therefore visitors can experience nature without a significant human presence. The project area contains multiple rich habitat types for dozens wildlife species (see Wildlife Resource Report). The riparian corridor is especially great for birding.

Quality

Current road densities and excessive motorized use can deter wildlife (especially deer and elk) from frequenting an area. Current off-road ATV/motorize damage is decreasing natural vegetation and therefore wildlife habitat. Sites along the river that lack riparian vegetation have less opportunities for wildlife viewing. Trash left behind by campers/visitors can be extremely harmful to wildlife species. Human trash and waste can cause wildlife to get sick or die and teaches certain species to be attracted to people.



Figure 3: Dispersed site #9. Shows how vehicles driving in riparian areas can damage vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Dispersed motorized use

Availability

The project area has approximately 30 miles of open Level II Forest Service roads (see Transportation analysis for breakout). Some of these roads can accommodate passenger vehicles but they are maintained and managed for high clearance vehicles. There are no designated motorized trails within the project area, however, the Three Trails OHV area is near-by across Highway 58. Motorized use occurring includes passenger vehicles, residential traffic, 4x4 vehicles, OHVs (off-highway vehicles), and motorcycles. The project area's flat topography and often open landscape makes it easy to travel illegally cross-country or on old road beds.

There are no Forest Service bridges within the project area. There historically was a bridge in the northern section of the project area, now where the locally known 'bridge out' (DS # 5 and 6) camp and picnic spot is located. Some members of the public expressed interest in replacing the bridge for ease of access or winter use, others liked that it minimized travel within the area with less 'through-traffic'. There is also one unauthorized user-created bridge at DS #14. It is unknown when the bridge was created but it appears to be providing OHV and snowmobile access. Access to the bridge is causing resource damage, especially in the wet riparian area to the west of the bridge. There are multiple private bridges outside of the Forest Service boundary within the river corridor.



Figure 4a and 4b: Unauthorized bridge at DS #14. Forest Service land is located on both sides of the bridge.

Quality

The current transportation system is not well marked and can be confusing for visitors. It is often unclear which roads are the Forest System Roads and which are user-created roads or old decommissioned roads. Many users unintentionally travel down closed roads and continue to expand them. Many roads (official and user-created) lead to sensitive riparian areas. Where there aren't clear boundaries, motorized users drive in or near wet, riparian areas causing extensive resource damage. Even within dry portions of the project area, extensive illegal motorized use creates large non-vegetative openings and makes it nearly

impossible for new vegetation to get established (DS #14 and 17). Illegal or unauthorized use that causes resource damage diminishes the experience for other forest visitors that want to appreciate the natural setting.

Without a crossing a ‘bridge-out’, there are no Forest Service bridges. Due to the other roads within the project area, a bridge is not needed for management or firefighting uses. Snowmobile riders at the public meeting expressed interest in creating a new Forest Service crossing. Since there are no designated snowmobile routes within the project area, the crossing would be for dispersed snowmobiling or for local traffic off of private property. The existing unauthorized bridge is not only causing resource damage to the river and riparian area, it is also unsafe. Forest visitors might assume the bridge is maintained by the Forest Service and not realize its limitations or risks. No weight bearing or safety inspections have been documented.



Figure 5: User trail through riparian to access unauthorized bridge at DS #14.



Figure 6: Dispersed site #14. Motorized use has completely removed all vegetation within the site.



Figure 7: Dispersed site #17. System road is in far right of picture, Little Deschutes is in the far left.



Figure 8: Unrestricted motorized use directly adjacent to the river

Fishing

Availability

The Upper Little Deschutes River has numerous locations for fishing within the project area. Most sportsmen are fishing brook or brown trout. Some popular fishing sites are near a road while others you need to walk into.

Quality

Fishermen enjoy the area not only for sport but for the beautiful surroundings and wildlife viewing. Due to the area's light use, fishermen can find more secluded areas. The history of the area including creating ditches and channeling stream has left negative impacts on stream health. In select areas where these past management actions are still present on the landscape, fish habitat is limited.

Special Uses

Availability

The two current special use activities occurring within the project area include firewood collecting and group site use at the historic cabin. Currently, the project area is open for roadside firewood collecting per the permitting process and Forest Firewood Synopsis. There are no recent vegetation management activities within the project area so there are no additional wood piles for collection.

The Ponderosa Mountain Men have an annual rendezvous near the historic cabin within the southern section of the project area. This even highlights the use of black powder rifles and other historic outdoor practices. They utilize and camp at DS # 19 under a special use permit authorized by the Forest Service.



Figure 9: Historic cabin and DS #19

Quality

The dispersed camping area around the historic cabin is slowly expanding and diminishing the natural vegetation. Some redefining of the site could protect the natural resources and keep the site at its current size.

Private property access

The Forest Service manages a number of roads that provide access to private residential lands across both National Forest System lands and private lands where Forest Service has acquired a right-of-way. Forest roads are often bumpy, dusty and not designed or maintained for residential use. This would be the case for all of the roads located within the Upper Little Deschutes Restoration project area.

The Upper Little Deschutes Restoration project area is adjacent to many private land parcels. Private land owners have historically accessed their private property using various routes within this planning area that include travel across National Forest and other private lands, creating direct unauthorized routes onto their properties outside of an established road system. These direct routes have become primary access points onto their private property. Often times these access points are from a National Forest system roads.

Other values not explicitly evaluated

Personal safety

Personal safety was a value expressed at the public values mapping meeting. Some members of the public expressed concern over camper and residents that were staying over two weeks and potentially participating in illegal activities. This concern was immediately relayed to our Law Enforcement Officer and local Field Ranger (who is also a Forest Protection Officer). The Crescent Ranger District has increased its presence within the area and stays receptive to public concerns.

Winter cross country skiing and snowmobiling

There are no designated winter trails within the project area but there is some local use for cross country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter. It appears most, if not all, the activity occurs from local private property owners. Over-the-snow Travel Management (Subpart C) has not been completed on the Deschutes National Forest. Under current Forest Service policy during the winter, recreationalist are allowed to travel over the snow “off trail”, as long as they are not causing resource damage.

Management Direction

Desired Condition

The goal of the Upper Little Deschutes is restoration not timber production, but there are additional uses that General Forest can be managed for including the following standards and guidelines for Recreation:

- **M8-2** – *Traditional informal campsites, hunter camps, or areas where concentrated recreation use occurs will be recognized as being significant in producing and utilizing dispersed recreation opportunities. Prescriptions for harvesting, cleanup, site preparation, and thinning will consider the environmental setting that contributes to the attraction of these sites for recreation purposes. The attempt will be made to retain this attractive character during and after treatments.*
- **M8-3** – *Recreation use can be discouraged or prohibited:*
 - *In areas where timber harvesting activities are occurring;*
 - *Where public safety is being threatened; and*
 - *Where resource damage from recreation activity is occurring or may occur.*

Dispersed camping has a high value for many visitors but unmanaged dispersed campsites, if left unchecked, will continue to expand and remove vegetation adjacent to the river. This expansion contributes to sedimentation, reduced plant and wildlife habitat, and impairs water quality and water storage (Table 1, Figure 7 and 9).

There are two known illegal dumping sites on the northern portion of the planning area. This distracts from the scenic beauty and recreational enjoyment of others and creates a safety hazard from the potential contamination.

- **M8-4** – *Generally, off-highway vehicle use is allowed. Closures and restrictions will be established where off road vehicle use will threaten or damage other resource values, such as plantations, soils, and wildlife....*

Only open Maintenance Level 2 (ML-2) roads or designated trails which appear on the Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) and the designated trail system from Three Trails OHV are open for ATV use on the Crescent Ranger District. The Three Trails OHV designated trail system does not encompass either section of the Upper Little Deschutes restoration project.

Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland Travel Management

- Motorized vehicle cross-country travel will be prohibited on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forest outside of designated roads, motorized trails and areas subject to the motorized vehicle and use exceptions identified in 36 CFR 212.51, and the limited conditions established in the Travel Management EIS (Travel Management ROD page 44).

- Motorized access for the purpose of dispersed camping only to designated, definite or existing campsites can be no closer than 30 feet to a stream, wetland, or water body within 300 feet of roads shown as open to motorized access for dispersed camping on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (Travel Management ROD page 45).

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – No Action

If the No Action alternative were selected, the existing condition would be perpetuating and potentially worsened. The current recreational opportunities could continue to cause resource damage and would not be sustainable to maintain. The reasons why visitors enjoy the area (natural beauty, wildlife viewing, and fishing) would diminish in quality.

Dispersed camping and Hunting camping

Without management and restoration, the existing dispersed camping sites would likely continue to expand and diminish the natural vegetation. Sites near the river would accelerate erosion and become more sandy and dusty. The natural beauty and primitiveness of the area would lessen. Trash often leads to more trash. If the existing trash and dump sites are not cleaned up, people will likely continue to leave garbage in them. Additionally, if there is no Forest Service presence, residents, and people participating in potentially other illegal activities may be more likely to occur as they believe they will not be bothered. (Note: residents are not assumed to be participating in other illegal activities. Many people are in the unfortunate situation of being temporarily homeless and just attempting to find a place to stay). This area could potentially become undesirable for people looking for a nice place to camp.

Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing and Fishing

Unmanaged and unsustainable recreational and motorized use could potentially impact the wildlife and riparian habitat. Wildlife viewing and fishing would decrease overtime as trash, erosion, and vegetation removal increased. High road densities would diminish the quality of habitat for many wildlife species. Animals in the area may become accustomed to eating and scavenging through human garbage, making them more likely to come in contact with people and their trash in the future.

Dispersed motorized use

Damage from unauthorized and user-created trails would continue. More areas would turn into dusty, sand pits preventing natural vegetation. Roads (unauthorized or system roads) near riparian areas would continue to cause sedimentation and negatively impact the riparian habitat. The current road system is poorly signed and visitors can easily get lost or inadvertently travel on unauthorized roads. Without creating a sustainable transportation system, visitors would continue to use unauthorized roads that are un-maintained and often causing resource damage. Additionally, the unauthorized bridge at DS #14 is a safety hazard to travelers in the area. The bridge has no weight or safety rating and could be potentially dangerous for users.

Special Uses and Private Property

The existing condition would remain.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

The proposed action consists of riparian enhancement, sustainable recreation, and sustainable transportation. Proposed activities were selected to maintain and enhance the existing values and benefits the landscape provides. The impacts of the proposed activities are recreation were addressed holistically, not separately.

Sustainable recreation proposed actions would provide recreational opportunities while reducing impacts to riparian and sensitive upland wildlife habitat. There are 19 dispersed sites (DS) and two dump sites (DUMP) that have been identified in the planning area (Table 1 and attached Figures 2, 3 and 6). Of the 19 dispersed sites, many have slowly expanded through the years into the riparian area and structures such as benches, meat poles, fire rings, and tire swings etc. have been added. This expansion, when left unchecked, contributes to sedimentation, reduced plant and wildlife habitat, erosion, impairs water quality, water storage, and recreation impacts.

Actions would include:

1. Increase Forest Service patrols into this area including education and enforcement of Travel Management rules.
2. Forest System roads would be designated to access appropriate dispersed sites.
3. Rehabilitation of sites would be accomplished to the degree needed by each site and may include different intensities of the following:
 - a. Mechanized equipment may be used on all sites to loosen and recontour the soil surface in order to reduce compaction and erosion, improve infiltration, and create planting sites.
 - b. Native vegetation (willow stakes, aspen etc.) would be planted and native grasses utilized to re-seed areas.
4. Dispersed sites redefined and/or rehabilitated or decommissioned.
 - a. Boulders, logs, fences, bollards, or other materials would be utilized to redefine the sites and various unauthorized structures would be removed.
 - b. Redefined sites would be pulled back from riparian areas and/or reduced in size due to resource or recreation impacts.
 - c. Decommissioned sites would have roads closed to site and would be revegetated to the extent necessary.
5. Two dump sites would be cleaned up and rehabilitated.

The Little Deschutes Cabin is a historic location utilized by organized groups for permitted events as well as by individuals and small groups for dispersed camping. Since the integrity of this structure is still relatively good, installation of interpretive panels would be not only to share the history of the area but also to encourage its continued stewardship. Interpretation of the site would also increase public education and awareness of the Historic Preservation and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act.

Actions would include:

1. Installation of a single panel interpretive sign near the Little Deschutes Cabin.
 - a. The sign would be installed near the FS 6125-880 road for maximum visibility and require the excavation of two post-holes.
2. Any unevaluated sites will be buffered.

Table 3: Project Area Dispersed Camping (DS) sites and Dump Sites

Site #	Action
Northern Portion	
DS #1	Boulder/log placement to remove vehicle access to meadow and riparian from the site. Site will be redefined. Rehab* ruts into the meadow.
DS #2	DS#2 is accessible from DS#1. Boulder/log placement to remove vehicle access to meadow and riparian. Site will be redefined. Rehab ruts into the meadow.
DS #3	No changes needed, maintain through Field Ranger presence.
DS #4	No changes needed, maintain through Field Ranger presence.

Site #	Action
DS #5	Pull boundary of site away from the river, define limits of site through bouldering, utilizing logs and/or revegetating.
DS #6	Pull boundary of site away from the riparian/ river, define limits of site through bouldering, bollards, utilizing logs and/or revegetating. Maintain through signage and Field Ranger presence.
DS #7	No changes needed.
DS #8	Site will be decommissioned. After cleanup of discarded trash site will be rehabbed with native vegetation
DS #9	Vehicle access from the site down into the meadow/river area will be blocked, and site boundaries redefined utilizing a combination of brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage. Maintain through Field Ranger presence.
DS #10	No changes needed.
DS #11	Riparian site, pull boundary of site away from the riparian area, define with brush, bouldering and/or signage. Maintain through Field Ranger presence.
Dump #1	Clean, close, and rehab this unauthorized dump site. Decommission the 9770-450 and -451 roads.
Dump #2	Clean this unauthorized dump site and maintain with Field Ranger presence.
Southern Portion	
DS #12	Site is expanding. Define site boundary through fencing, bouldering, bollards, utilizing logs and/or revegetating.
DS #13	Riparian site, pull boundary of site away from the riparian area, define with fencing, brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage and rehab riparian area.
DS #14	Close vehicle access to site. Rehab damage, walk-in only. Remove unauthorized bridge over the river. Define with fencing, brush, bouldering, bollards, or utilizing logs. Native vegetation may be planted. See Riparian #2.
DS #15	Remove unauthorized footbridge and redefine with brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage and rehab riparian area.
DS #16	Pull boundary of site away from the riparian area, define with brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage and rehab riparian area.
DS #17	Pull boundary of site away from the riparian area, define with brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage and rehab riparian area.
DS #18	Old Campground area. Define site to existing boundary by utilizing brush, bouldering, bollards, and/or signage and rehab riparian area.
DS #19	Cabin and adjacent site. Utilize buck and pole fencing to be placed by hand to restrict vehicle access to river/meadow. No machinery use in site.

*Rehabilitation could include redefining the site (that could include bouldering, utilizing logs for the perimeter etc.), removing unauthorized structures, replanting native vegetation (willow stakes, aspen etc.) and native grasses utilized to re-seed areas.

Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures

1. No instream structures will be placed within approximately 10-30 yards of remaining dispersed recreation sites (DS sites # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) to protect the integrity of the structure as well as minimize disturbance at the dispersed site.
2. To reduce impacts to the recreating public, interested publics would be notified of the schedule of implementation for activities planned on a yearly basis. Notification would generally take place in the spring and could be by email, US Postal Service letter, FS website and/or fliers.

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Dispersed Camping

Direct and Indirect Effects

The Proposed Action will enhance the quality of dispersed camping within the ULDR project area. The proposed activities will maintain and promote a natural, semi-primitive camping environment while still having an undeveloped feel. Sites will be rehabilitated where necessary to allow for natural vegetation to regrow and reestablish. By refining sites with boulders or fencing, sites will no longer expand.

The implementation of the proposed riparian enhancement activities and instream work may temporarily displace campers, however, implementation will not occur across the project area at the same time. Campers would easily be able to find another suitable dispersed site in the area. Over the long run, the instream tree structures may have an indirect impact if the water level slightly rises around the features. This impact is expected to be minimal (0-2 foot change in water level). The proposed site refining with boulders or fencing would prevent people from camping in the potentially inundated areas directly adjacent to the river. The proposed action will bring the ULDR project area into compliance with Travel Management and Dispersed Camping guidelines stating that campers need to be at least 30 feet away from water bodies and streams (Travel Management ROD page 45).

The only sites that would be closed to motor vehicle access would be DS #8, Dump #1, Dump #2, and DS #14. Although DS #8 and #14 may have previously served as camp sites, they are only operating as dump sites or ATV sand pits. Once cleaned up and restored, visitors will still be able to walk through the site but not drive their vehicle. There is no evidence of camping at Dump #1 or #2. Increasing the Forest Service presence in the area will help curb misuse of dispersed camp sites (dumping, residing). It will also be necessary to ensure the site refining and bouldering remains in place. Within the last two years, the local field ranger has been more frequently visiting the ULDR project area. The District has already seen an improvement in trash, dumping, and resource damage. People illegally residing or camping longer than two weeks are still likely to frequent the area due to the rising homeless population in central Oregon. The proposed action may not be able to prevent them from coming to the ULDR project area however it should minimize potential resource damage and impact to other campers.

The sustainable transportation proposed actions will still allow for access to all of the dispersed camping sites. With less unauthorized roads and clearer signage, it may be easier for visitor to find a place to camp.

Cumulative Effects

The spatial boundary for cumulative effects to recreation resources is the ULDR project area on the Crescent Ranger District. Recreation opportunities and features are managed district by district. There are no other past, present, or future activities that overlap in time and space with the ULDR project area that would have an impact on dispersed camping. Therefore, the cumulative effects of this project on dispersed camping are the same as the direct and indirect effects.

Hunting Camping and Hunting

Direct and Indirect Effects

Similar to effects on Dispersed Camping, the Proposed Action will have positive impacts to the quality of hunting and camping for hunting within the project area. The riparian restoration projects and site redefining will increase riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat in the project area. Hunters will be asked to limit the 'game poles' they create within a site and will be asked to remove any features when they leave the site. This will ensure that for years to come the campsites remain clean and natural looking.

The sustainable transportation proposal allows for the same amount of designated open roads as there is currently. If hunters are presently driving on unauthorized or user created roads, they will no longer be able to do so. The transportation plan was designed to provide adequate access across the project area and is not expected to impact hunting. If anything, the decrease in unauthorized roads may minimally improve wildlife habitat, especially for deer and elk. Effects to wildlife species can be found in the wildlife specialist report.

Cumulative Effects

The spatial boundary for cumulative effects for hunting camping and hunting is the ULDR project area on the Crescent Ranger District. Hunting, as a recreational opportunity, is managed district by district. Hunting could be impacted by the Crescent Roadside Firewood Strategy (2012) occurring on the District. Having additional people present in the area and noise of chainsaws might cause the big game to move away from the area till the activity is complete. The scale of the ULDR proposed actions cannot be meaningfully measured to increase wildlife habitat or hunting quality. Overall there should be a neutral or slightly positive effect to hunting opportunities. As previously mentioned, hunting is regulated by Oregon State Department of Fish and Game, the Forest Service manages wildlife habitat on National Forest system lands.

Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing

Direct and Indirect Effects

The proposed activities will have minimal effects to dispersed recreation opportunities within the project area including hiking, walking, and wildlife viewing. Any unauthorized or illegal roads that are closed or decommissioned as part of the proposed action won't be drivable, however, will still be available for foot traffic. For those visitors that are looking for a quieter experience, they will be able to hike and walk on the closed roads without being interrupted by vehicle traffic. Proposed riparian enhancement and dispersed site restoration and refinement will have no impact on hiking, walking, or wildlife viewing. The restoration activities proposed may have an indirect effect to wildlife viewing as wildlife habitat increases over time. Additionally cleaner, trash-free sites will be more enjoyable for visitors in the area.

Cumulative Effects

The spatial boundary for cumulative effects to recreation resources is the ULDR project area on the Crescent Ranger District. Recreation opportunities and features are managed district by district. There are no other past, present, or future activities that overlap in time and space with the ULDR project area that would have an impact on dispersed hiking, walking, or wildlife viewing. Therefore, the cumulative effects of this project on hiking, walking, and wildlife viewing are the same as the direct and indirect effects.

Dispersed motorized use

Direct and Indirect Effects

The transportation proposals were made to accommodate popular travel routes as well as access across the project area and adding a connection to the Gulick Road (FS Road 6125). The Forest Service will update the Motor Use Vehicle Map as changes occur and will annually update the public on upcoming closures. Closures and road changes will likely be staged over multiple years as funding is available. The proposed action will prevent additional resource damage occurring from motor vehicles while also bringing the area in compliance with Travel Management guidelines (Travel Management ROD page 44). Future motorist will be able to more accurately tell where they are driving and which roads are open.

The unauthorized bridge at DS #14 will be removed as part of the proposed action. Removal of the bridge will ensure the safety of travelers in the area. Current users of the bridge (mostly local near-by residents) will have to travel farther to cross the Little Deschutes River to access the same Forest Service land. Although this may be inconvenient for a select number of individuals, it will stop the resource damage

occurring at the bridge site and will provide for the safety of all forest visitors. The Forest Service does not allow the use of unauthorized, non-certified bridges on national forest system land. There are other opportunities for user to travel and cross the river to access all portions of the project area.

This project does not impact any designated over the snow trails. The change in the transportation system may impact local snowmobile riders who travel cross country or over the unauthorized bridge. As roads are closed and/or decommissioned, they will no longer be able to travel over them. It can be difficult to tell if a road is closed when there is a high snow pack so they will need to exercise caution while riding off-trail. Riders utilizing the unauthorized bridge will need to take other routes to cross the river, slightly increasing their travel time.

Cumulative Effects

The spatial boundary for cumulative effects to recreation resources is the ULDR project area on the Crescent Ranger District. Recreation opportunities and features are managed district by district. The Three Trails OHV project does not overlap the project area but is adjacent to the southwest corner of the Upper Little Deschutes Restoration Project area. The Three Trails OHV trails are still being built and developed, however, it currently offers ample opportunities to have off-road motorized experiences. Users that previously drove illegally off-road within the ULDR project area will be informed of the high quality motorized trails just on the other side of Highway 58. Four-wheelers, OHV riders, and motorcycle riders can find challenging trails and even rock pits to develop their skills and enjoy riding in the forest. It is highly encouraged that users go to designated motorized trails and play areas to prevent resource damage that occurs from unauthorized off-road use. An impact would be noise from the OHV/ATVs could be experienced by recreationists in the southern portion of the planning area or chainsaw use during the construction of the Three Trails OHV trail system.

Fishing

Direct and Indirect Effects

The Proposed Action maintains access to all documented fishing locations. The District recognized the importance of this treasured recreational opportunity and wants to maintain this activity in the area. Some of the dispersed sites will refine how close people can park near the river. In some locations, fishermen may have to walk an additional 30-100 feet to access an existing site. The proposed riparian restoration and sustainable recreation proposed activities will have the indirect effect of increasing riparian vegetation, enhancing riparian and fisheries habitats, and an overall healthier stream system. This will eventually create better quality fishing along the Upper Little Deschutes River.

Cumulative Effects

The spatial boundary for cumulative effects to recreation resources is the ULDR project area on the Crescent Ranger District. Recreation opportunities and features are managed district by district. There are no other past, present, or future activities that overlap in time and space with the ULDR project area that would have an impact on fishing. Therefore, the cumulative effects of this project on fishing are the same as the direct and indirect effects. Fishing licensing is managed and permitted through Oregon State Department of Fish and Game.

Special Uses

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

The project will have no effect on firewood collection and permitting. The public is allowed to purchase a permit and collect firewood off of open National Forest system roads per the Firewood Synopsis and Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM). None of the restoration treatments will yield additional firewood opportunities. With no direct or indirect effect, there are no cumulative effects to firewood.

The proposed action will maintain existing special use permitted activities within the project area. Ponderosa Mountain Men will be able to continue to enjoy the Little Deschutes River for their annual event. With the restoration and site refinement around the historic cabin, the site will be maintained and enhanced for years to come. Site refinement will not impact special uses within the area. With no direct or indirect effect, there are no cumulative effects to special uses.

Private Property Access

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

The Forest Service will add several unauthorized roads into its forest road system that would allow public access to these areas. Some forest system roads would end at a private property line, disqualifying that access point for any required management tool other than that obtained from the district roads manager needed for road maintenance. Other unauthorized roads that traverse National Forest System lands onto private property used as an access point or driveway would require an authorization in the form of a special use permit. An annual land use fee is associated with the special use permit and is based on the linear right-of-way fee table updated annually. Individual private property owners would work with the Forest Service to determine if a special use permit is required regarding the single or multiple access points that traverse across forest land onto private land. There are no other past, present, or future activities that overlap in time and space with the ULDR project area that would have an impact on Private Property Access.

Summary of Effects

Overall, the proposed project will have beneficial effects to recreational resources within the project area. The proposed actions will maintain and enhance the existing values and benefits that the public and internal Forest Service employees expressed were on the landscape. Forest visitors will benefit from the improved dispersed camping sites and increased riparian and wildlife habitat. Management activities and increased presence will hopefully reduce and eliminate the illegal activities and resource damage that is occurring. The ULDR project area will continue to be the community of Crescent's backyard by providing quality, dispersed recreation opportunities.

Compliance with LRMP and Other Relevant Laws, Regulations, Policies and Plans

This project (No Action and Proposed Action) is consistent with the Deschutes LRMP and the Deschutes and Ochoco Travel Management Record of Decision. This project is consistent with all local, state, regional guidance on recreation management.

Degree to Which the Purpose and Need for Action is Met

Table 4: Summary comparison of how the alternatives address the Purpose and Need

Resource Element	Resource Indicator (Quantify if possible)	No Action (Alternative 1)	Proposed Action
Dispersed Camping	1. Availability 2. Quality	1. Excellent 2. Adequate/Poor Doesn't address long term sustainable recreation	Promotes sustainable recreation
Hunting: Camping and Hunting	1. Availability 2. Quality	1. Excellent 2. Adequate Doesn't address long term sustainable recreation	Promotes sustainable recreation

Dispersed hiking, walking, wildlife viewing	1. Availability 2. Quality	1. Excellent 2. Adequate Doesn't address long term sustainable recreation	Promotes sustainable recreation
Dispersed motorized use	1. Availability 2. Quality	1. Adequate 2. Poor Doesn't address long term sustainable transportation system	Promotes sustainable recreation and sustainable transportation system
Fishing	1. Availability 2. Quality	1. Excellent 2. Excellent Doesn't address long term sustainable recreation	Promotes sustainable recreation
Special Uses	Individual Basis	Adequate- currently meeting needs. NA—not tied to purpose and need	NA- not tied to purpose and need
Private property access	Individual Basis	Lack of consistent management. Doesn't address long term sustainable transportation system.	Promotes sustainable transportation system

Acronyms

ATV: All-terrain vehicle

EA: Environmental Assessment

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

DS: Dispersed Site

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

OHV: Off-highway vehicle

ULDR: Upper Little Deschutes River

UTV: Utility terrain vehicle